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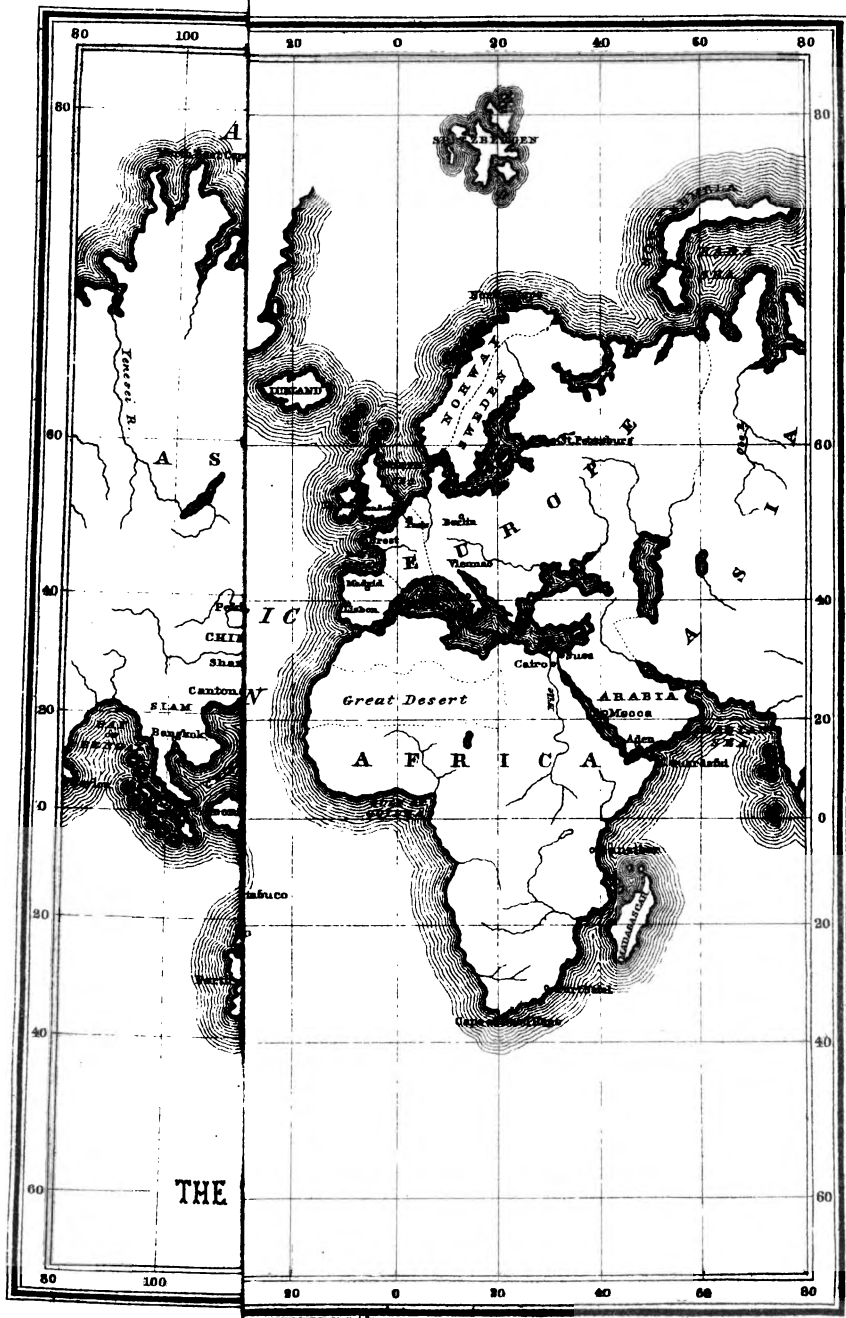
A BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE
LITERARY UNDERTAKINGS

OF
HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT.



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THE
LITERARY UNDERTAKINGS
OF
HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT.

During the past twenty-five years, a work has been going on in California, the nature and importance of which will be better understood fifty years hence than now. Shortly after establishing himself as a bookseller and publisher in San Francisco in 1856, Mr Hubert H. Bancroft began to collect materials for history, and has continued such efforts from that day to this, the result being in 1881, 35,000 volumes, with a rate of increase of about 1000 volumes a year, and a brick building erected specially to hold the collection. The cost in money thus far, not to mention time and traveling expenses, was about \$300,000. But this was only the beginning. In 1869 Mr Bancroft turned his attention more particularly to the utilizing of his gathered information; and to that end he had his library catalogued, indexed, and such facts and incidents as he desired placed before him in the forms of extracts, abstracts, and references. This labor involved the continued application of not less than twelve assistants during the entire term, and they are still engaged in the same capacity. The expense here has been something over \$200,000—say in all, half a million in money. But the money expenditure was the lesser part of it. So far as it was possible, Mr Bancroft abandoned business entirely, and threw himself and his life into the arduous but fascinating tasks of authorship, the final result being, published and to be published, thirty-nine volumes of History, Ethnology, and other and more special subjects. This, then, briefly stated, is the work referred to.

Those who desire, can learn more by reading further. Mr Bancroft was born at Granville, Ohio, the 5th of May, 1832. His parents were of a colony that came from Massachusetts and Vermont, and were of that stern New England stock called Pr-

ritan, that held fast to tradition, and expected much from children. All day Sunday, and parts of other days, religious duties were strictly observed, the remainder of the time being devoted the winters to school and the summers to work. When sixteen years of age, Mr Bancroft entered the bookstore of his brother-in-law, Mr George H. Derby, in Buffalo; in 1852 he was sent by his employer to establish a bookstore in California. In this he was successful, one of the largest mercantile and manufacturing establishments in that line in the United States being the fruit of this modest beginning. In fact, his whole life has been a success; his two lives, we might say, one being the commercial and the other the literary life. Thrown from boyhood upon his own resources, he early learned the lesson of carving for himself his fortune. He early became imbued with the idea that to attain the useful, the practical, that which to him and to others would prove the most beneficial, was possible, and his whole life thus far has been spent almost without cessation in working out that idea. Though always extremely fond of books, with strong predilections for a professional career, with tastes which in any event would impel him toward the higher intellectual life, he nevertheless while attending to business was a diligent man of business, applying himself early and late, and with his whole strength. It is needless to say, that by such means only, from a small beginning, a commercial success as signal as his, in a field not the most extensive or promising in the world, could be achieved. His habits of industry never left him, and when he entered the field of letters, he carried with him not only the pecuniary means essential to the accomplishment of great results, but those common-sense views which spring from practical business experience, and which literary men so often lack.

Returning to the first statement of the case, we will give its several parts a little more in detail, but still very briefly. It was accident rather than design which led both to the formation of the Library and to authorship. Having from the first a *penchant* for publishing more pleasant than profitable in a new country, and feeling a growing need in the preparation of books for the press, of that valuable information relative to the Pacific Coast which was dropping out of existence for want of some one to save it, he began instinctively to gather and preserve it. First,

he went over his stock and placed by themselves all books and pamphlets on California and Oregon. Then, from all parts of the country, he brought in material, gradually extending the area of his territory, until the western half of North America was embraced within its limits. Then he went East, and to Europe, to see what could be gathered there; and this he did many times, and with much diligence. From the Andrade sale, in Leipsic, of the Mexican collection intended by Maximilian as the foundation of an Imperial Library, about 3000 volumes were obtained. Then, there was the sale in London of the Ramirez collection, and the sale in New York of Squier's manuscripts, and a score of others that brought to Mr Bancroft's Library large and important additions.

The business was originally established on Montgomery street, near Merchant. Both business and Library having assumed considerable proportions, in 1869 Mr Bancroft erected a large building on Market street, and moved into it, the Library being placed on the fifth floor. There it remained, subject to no small risk from fire, until 1881, when Mr Bancroft purchased a large lot on Valencia street, built in the middle of it a two-story and basement brick building, 40 by 60 feet, covered all the openings with strong iron shutters, and in it placed his books, maps, and manuscripts, which by this time numbered 35,000, besides 400 files of Pacific Coast newspapers. There they now stand, building and books, a monument to the elevation of mind and patient devotion of the collector.

The plain exterior of the substantial structure is somewhat relieved by the trees and flowers which surround it; the interior is conveniently arranged, and well lighted and ventilated. The main library and working-room is on the second floor. Here also is the historian's private study, a large apartment facing the south and east, with light softened by tints agreeable to the eye, and tastefully furnished. Four tables covered with historical notes, arranged in the order required by the writer for immediate use, occupy the floor; at one of these the historian may sit and write, at another he may stand. At one end is a case filled with manuscript ready for the printer, while on the walls are hung, beside maps for constant use, certificates of degrees conferred and memberships of learned societies. Three rooms in the rear are used by as many of Mr Bancroft's staff, while the

remainder occupy the main hall. The Library walls are filled with shelving nine tiers high, containing four classes of books. Most of the space is occupied by works alphabetically arranged, each volume bearing a number, and the numbers running consecutively from 1 to 12,000, which constitute the first class. The second class is that of rare books, three hundred volumes set apart by reason of their great value, not merely pecuniary, though each volume will bring from \$40 to \$400 in the book markets of the world, but literary value as standard authorities, bibliographic curiosities, specimens of early printing, and rare linguistics. Not one of these volumes but is worthy of careful study, particularly the earliest products of the Mexican press, and the first books printed in California. The third class is composed entirely of manuscripts, in 1200 volumes of three subdivisions, relating respectively to Mexico and Central America, to California, and to other Pacific States. There are here many curious and valuable sixteenth-century records of Mexican affairs; but the Californian is attracted more particularly to the Californian manuscripts, numbering nearly 600 volumes. Here he is shown, first, the public archives of the State, and of its chief towns, from 1769 to 1847, in 76 volumes, copied and extracted from 500 tomes, and no end of packages of original records, preserved by the United States government, and by the various counties; then 61 volumes of Mission Archives, copied from the writings of the old padres, and supplemented by several bulky volumes of originals; next 100 large volumes of private archives, most precious of all, consisting of some 5000 original papers collected from native Californian and pioneer families. The number of volumes gives no idea of the value of this collection, since each one would furnish from 10 to 50 documents heretofore wholly unknown, each of which by itself would send the enthusiastic local annalist into ecstasies. Two hundred volumes of original narratives from memory by as many early Californians, native and pioneer, written by themselves or taken down from their lips by Mr Bancroft's agents, constitute a valuable and unique mass of historic data; and finally a miscellaneous collection, 130 volumes strong, completes the Californian manuscripts. The thoughtful visitor is impressed particularly with the ideas, first, that it would be folly to attempt the writing of an exhaustive history without this ma-

terial; and secondly, that for no other country in the world does there exist so perfect a collection of material for its earliest annals. The fourth class is that made up of 450 works of reference, bibliographies, etc. This makes a total of 13,950 volumes, which were placed on this upper floor immediately on completion of the building.

Descending by a wide, open stairway, which practically throws the whole Library into one room, the visitor finds on the side-wall shelves of the lower department 104 sets, aggregating 10,000 volumes. These sets are conveniently lettered and numbered in a manner that renders each work readily accessible, but which need not be described in detail here. They consist of large collections of voyages and travels, and of documents, periodicals, legislative and other public productions of the different states and territories, collections of laws and legal reports, California supreme court records and briefs, scrap-books, almanacs, directories, folios, bound volumes of pamphlets, and other miscellaneous matter. Here may be noticed Lord Kingsborough's famous folios on Mexican antiquities; a splendid set of the *United States Exploring Expedition* in 27 volumes, quarto and folio; the tomes of photographs and engravings on Mexican and Central American ruins by Charnay, Waldeck, Dupaix, and others; 130 volumes of Judge Ben Hayes' historical collection on Southern California; works in Russian on Alaska; and the Ross colony; and some thousands of Mexican *sermones* in 60 volumes. Of no inconsiderable importance is a set of *Papeles Varios*, in 216 volumes, including some 3000 Mexican pamphlets, largely political in their nature, and invaluable for historic purposes. This grand set has been formed by uniting a dozen smaller ones collected by as many prominent Mexicans in past years. On the rear or western wall are the United States government documents, numbering 2000 volumes. Three lofty double tiers of shelving which extend across the room from north to south are loaded with the bulky files of 400 Pacific States newspapers, before mentioned, amounting—if a year of weeklies and three months of dailies be counted a volume—to over 4000 volumes. It is a somewhat unwieldy mass, but indispensable to the local historian. In this room is a huge case with drawers for maps, geographically arranged, and also cases containing card indexes and catalogues, which have been prepared with great labor, and

which for working purposes are found infinitely preferable to any system of classifying books on the shelves. Amongst the first labors of the librarian after removal was to copy the card catalogue into an imperial folio volume of 1400 pages, and place in each volume the book-mark of 'THE BANCROFT LIBRARY.' Maps and historic prints fill all not otherwise occupied space on the walls; scattered about on top of the book-cases, and elsewhere, are some aboriginal relics and curiosities which have at various times been presented to the Library by its admirers, but Mr Bancroft makes no effort to collect in this direction. The basement of the building is used for storage of fuel, of stereotype plates, and other articles. The Library is still growing at the rate of about 1000 volumes a year.

It is clearly evident to every intelligent person that the creation of this Library was an important event in the annals of the country. Nothing approaching it in originality, value, and magnitude has ever been accomplished in America, even by a state, a government, or a society. None but a private individual could have collected this material; none but a man of ability, wealth, and literary enthusiasm—qualities which we rarely see combined—could have remained capable and constant during the long series of years necessary to such a development. If a state or society would vote and supply the money, which they would be backward about doing even if they could; and if the officers of the state or society did not steal or misapply it; where would be found a competent person ready to devote thirty years of his life in the quiet, persistent effort necessary? Who would have tramped the whole world, searching every nook and corner of it for additions to an accumulation of facts? And when all printed material had thus been brought from the four quarters of the earth, the work was only just begun. There were a thousand, five thousand witnesses to the early history of this coast yet living, whom, as before intimated, Mr Bancroft resolved to see and question, all of them possible; and a thousand he did see, and a thousand his assistants saw, and wrote down from their own mouths the vivid narratives of their experiences. Then there were the government and family archives which he gathered or copied, and the thousands of stray documents he hunted and filed away for safe keeping. And after many years were thus spent, and many thousands of dollars, to erect a sub-

stantial edifice for the accommodation and preservation of this priceless material—has the thing ever been done in any such way as this before? No one with money could go into the market and buy such a collection; all the money in the United States could not reproduce it were it scattered or destroyed. Like the mammoth trees of California, such a Library is a growth, a development; it cannot be made to order, or spoken into existence.

A visitor writing in an Eastern journal says:—"As I left The Bancroft Library, it was with a conviction that the institution visited is one whose existence marks an era in the history of our far West. I know of no other private library anywhere for which a separate edifice has been erected. I doubt if there be another building used like this exclusively as a literary workshop. Certainly there is none such where there is no hope of pecuniary gain from the product of the labor done." And a Californian writes:—"For a private individual, a man of business, to collect 35,000 volumes on a special subject, and to erect a building to hold it, and preserve it from fire, at a cost of not less than \$150,000; to go further, and devote his time and income to the profitless task of placing accurately on record his country's history, is a remarkable and unprecedented thing. We are glad and proud that it is in our state of California that such an evolution is to be noted. Mr Bancroft we suppose is after fame, and makes no claim to philanthropic motives; yet such a man, if it be a desirable thing that a country's history should be written, seems very like a public benefactor."

As before intimated, it was not until after several years had elapsed from the beginning of the collecting, nor until the Library numbered over 12,000 volumes, that Mr Bancroft entertained serious thoughts of authorship. But during the process of collecting there had arisen in him a strong desire for production. He wished during his life-time to see his collection utilized. By the year 1868 this desire became so strong in him that he determined to place in his brother's hands the active management of the business, retaining his interest in it nevertheless, and to devote the remainder of his life to literary pursuits.

It seemed due to science, to history, and to philosophy, that information concerning a new and rapidly developing country,

information of vast importance to its occupants and to mankind everywhere, should not be simply hoarded by its possessor, but should be made the common property of all. Here were many measures of valuable knowledge brought together, but this knowledge was in such a shape as to be of little value to any one; being scattered through these thousands of volumes in half a dozen different languages, buried in illegibly written manuscripts, and mixed with an immense mass of useless and irrelevant matter, with petty personal narratives, voyages and travels, and local history, unimportant alike to the general reader and to the scholar. While life is so short, and there is so much to be learned, while mankind are hurrying forward so rapidly, and books and inventions are multiplied, the searcher after information wants his facts brought before him in a clear, compact, and well arranged form, so that he may obtain them fully and quickly. Hence it was that Mr Bancroft concluded that he could do no better work, none that would more benefit mankind or reflect higher credit on himself, than to sift this material and bring together and arrange these facts in a series of at once compact and exhaustive works. In other words, he determined to write and publish a number of books, with this new Western Coast as the basis of them all, taking up one subject after another, such as its native races, its history, and the like, and to continue his labors as life and health should be spared.

The obstacles were great, but so were his resolution and his courage. Unused to literary labor, all was experiment with him at first, yet he planned boldly, and brought large resources to his aid. Realizing fully how little one laborer alone could accomplish in such a field, he sought to utilize the labor of others. But being himself at a loss how to start the work, he found it difficult to direct others. And thus passed a year, two years, nearly all of which were in one sense lost; for he was obliged to try at least a hundred persons unable to render him any assistance for every one who finally proved of value.

As competent persons were secured, he set about indexing the subject-matter of his whole collection. Selecting some thirty or forty subjects which approximately embraced all real knowledge—historical, ethnographical, biographical, and physical—he made an index of the whole mass as one would index a single book; thereby enabling the writer on any one of these topics to

follow his subject through this otherwise trackless sea of knowledge. A stranger views with astonishment, as he inspects the Library, a great number of queer-looking paper bags, such as are used by grocers, seemingly out of place in a library, until informed of their use. The contents of these bags represent labor which cost not less than \$80,000, consisting as they do, of millions of notes and references made by Mr Bancroft's assistants, all working upon the same model, so that what ten or a hundred authors have said on each individual topic and incident may be brought before him at one time. It was here ascertained by experience that in no other way could notes be so conveniently arranged, or so compactly classified.

Money has been mentioned once or twice in this connection. Although there are some things money cannot buy—in which category we may safely place the enthusiasm and application of which were engendered the literary labors of Mr Bancroft—and although money cannot write books, yet a lavish expenditure during a long term of years has been absolutely essential to this achievement. During the fifteen years of active operation, in addition to the cost of his Library, his Library Building, and his own personal efforts and outlays, Mr Bancroft has spared no necessary expenditure for indexing, note-taking, making references, and in classifying, sifting, and arranging materials for his Literary Works. Yet this he counts as nothing. He has never for a moment regretted it. He might economize in some things, but not in this. The money was spent in a good cause. He did not indulge in literature for gain; he was too experienced a publisher to imagine for a moment that work of this kind would pay pecuniarily. Not that he was opposed to pay, or would think any the less of his work if it did pay; but he knew it to be contrary to the nature of things that there should be profitable returns from such expenditure. He will get back what he can in the publication of his work, but he is perfectly satisfied to be out several hundred thousand dollars. He expected nothing less. What he wants, and all he wants, is a just and proper appreciation of what he has done on the part of good and intelligent men everywhere, and that is being done to his entire satisfaction, as innumerable of the highest testimonials from all parts amply assure us. When Mr Bancroft gave to the world the first-fruits of his literary toil, in a work of 5 vols. 8vo,

entitled *The Native Races of the Pacific States*, the magnitude of the undertaking, and the great labor of which it bore the marks, created a veritable surprise in the reading and scientific world; and not only this, but the author's faithful research, fair treatment of other writers cited, modest pretensions, and graceful, vigorous literary style won for him the warmest praise from scholars on every side. No work of its solid class in the past fifty years has been so extensively and so favorably reviewed by the critics at home and abroad.

But this by no means filled the measure of his ambition. It was history, and that alone of the first order, that would satisfy him. Indeed, the *Native Races* was more the result of accident—a lucky one as it proved—than of design. It happened in this way. After giving up making an Encyclopædia, which was Mr Bancroft's first idea, he seated himself to write history. Beginning with the coming of Rodrigo de Bastidas upon the Isthmus of Panamá, then and thereafter whenever Europeans touched the country in any of its several parts, they encountered the aborigines, whom the historian could neither wholly pass by nor at once portray. The consequence was a separate work describing them, which, to what should follow, was at once independent and introductory. This being done, Mr Bancroft went on with his *History of the Pacific States*, carrying it to successful completion. This, indeed, is a series of full and complete histories from the coming of Europeans to the present time, and comprises *Central America; Mexico; New Mexico and Arizona; California; Utah and Nevada; The Northwest Coast; Oregon; Washington; Idaho and Montana; British Columbia, and Alaska*. The several special works which are to follow are upon subjects kindred to West Coast occupation; they are all clearly defined, are mostly written, and will appear after the History has been put forth, and all at the rate of three or four volumes a year.

THE HISTORICAL WORKS

OF

HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT

IN THEIR RELATION TO THE

PROGRESS AND DESTINY OF THE PACIFIC STATES.



BANCROFT'S WORKS.

ORDER OF PUBLICATION.

The publishers of the works of Hubert Howe Bancroft announce the following as the order of publication:

THE NATIVE RACES.....	BANCROFT'S WORKS, Vols. I-V.
Vol. I—CENTRAL AMERICA....	“ “ Vol. VI.
Vol. I—MEXICO.	“ “ Vol. IX.
Vol. II—MEXICO.	“ “ Vol. X.
Vol. II—CENTRAL AMERICA...	“ “ Vol. VII.
Vol. III—MEXICO.....	“ “ Vol. XI.
Vol. I—NORTH MEXICAN STATES AND TEXAS..	“ “ Vol. XV.
Vol. I—CALIFORNIA.....	“ “ Vol. XVIII.
Vol. I—NORTHWEST COAST....	“ “ Vol. XXVII.
Vol. II—NORTHWEST COAST...	“ “ Vol. XXVIII.
Vol. IV—MEXICO.....	“ “ Vol. XII.
Vol. V—MEXICO.....	“ “ Vol. XIII.
Vol. II—CALIFORNIA.....	“ “ Vol. XIX.
Vol. III—CALIFORNIA.....	“ “ Vol. XX.
Vol. IV—CALIFORNIA.....	“ “ Vol. XXI.
Vol. V—CALIFORNIA.....	“ “ Vol. XXII.

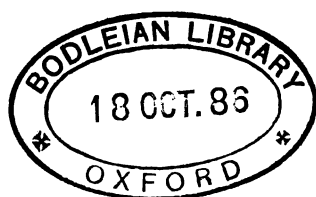
“Bancroft's Works,” it will be observed, are not published in numerical order. It was deemed advisable to issue them in the order in which the subject naturally presents itself, the order seemingly demanded by its territorial peculiarities, the order, moreover, in which the volumes would properly follow one another were the Pacific States all of one nation or government.

The Native Races, the first five volumes of “Bancroft's Works,” covers the entire historic field. Though it need not be read first as a whole, it is an apt introduction, leading up to and flowing naturally into the History (proper) of the Pacific States. While following the narrative in the volumes from VI to XXXIX inclusive, the reader may, also, by reference to the *Native Races*, pursue that most interesting of all investigations, the study of the social conditions and customs, the arts, industry, architecture, the myths, traditions, and languages of primitive peoples. Thus, one is able, at pleasure, to draw from the *Native Races* at any point as he advances through the History.

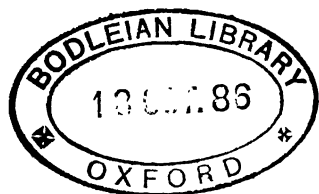
As a further explanation of the order of publication as announced, it may be stated: The first points touched by Europeans on the North American Continent were the Isthmus of Darien and parts of the coast thence northward. Naturally, then, the “History of the Pacific States” opens with the “History of Central America,” which covers the period from 1501 to 1530. But instead of the second volume of *Central America*, the first of *Mexico* comes next, because the period involving the conquest of Mexico, that is, 1516–1521 is included within the period of the first volume of *Central America*. Then, instead of proceeding with the second volume of *Central America*, which is from 1530 to 1800, we issue next the second volume of *Mexico*, 1521 to 1600, and then Vol. II *Central America*, and after that Vol. III *Mexico*, 1600 to 1800. Then Vol. I *History of North Mexican States and Texas*, down to 1800. The early history of Texas constitutes part of the history of Mexico. It is in this volume of the series that the affairs of Texas are most fully delineated.

Having thus brought all of Mexico and Central America down to the year 1800, we proceed north and issue Vol. I *California*, 1542 to 1800; then Vol. I *Northwest Coast*, 1543 to 1800; then Vol. II *Northwest Coast*, 1800 to 1846. This brings the History of the entire coast, from Panamá to as far north as the publication of the series is announced, down to the beginning of the present century, and enables us to issue the volume on Alaska at any time, thus covering the entire territory from Panamá to Alaska, and other volumes in their natural or chronological order, the order of publication of which will be duly announced. But, as indicated, it was deemed best to issue *Mexico IV* and *V* and *California II, III, IV, and V* before *Alaska*.

The thirty-nine volumes are so numbered as to bring those of the several sets together, consecutive and finished. Then these sets, taken in their order, form a complete whole.







BANCROFT'S WORKS.

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THE HISTORICAL WORKS

OF

HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT,

IN THEIR RELATION TO THE

PROGRESS AND DESTINY OF THE PACIFIC COAST.

At the dawn of civilization there were set in motion two human streams, which took opposite directions from the Asiatic cradle of the race; one flowing eastward through India and China to the Pacific coast of Asia, and the other flowing westward through Europe, and across the Atlantic, finding its way finally over the new-found continent to the Pacific coast of America. Here both must forever rest, their further progress being barred by the same great ocean. Conquest and colonization on any considerable scale are at an end. The world is for the most part occupied by the dominant races, at least all the better portions of it. There are no more good, fertile lands in the temperate zone to be had for nothing, or at merely nominal prices.

The first mentioned current of humanity, proceeding eastward from Egypt, or Armenia, reached the eastern border of Asia at a comparatively early day, and before any very high plane of intelligence or refinement had been reached. And in this half-civilized stagnant state the people of eastern Asia have ever since remained. Very different was the fate of the other stream, which became cleansed and purified all along its course. To the arts and refinement of Greece were added the literature and learning of Rome, and the practical inventions of western Europe; so that when the men of Spain and England first stood upon the shores of the Pacific, they were second in energy and intelligence to none the sun shines upon. Here, indeed, was a

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grand beginning for a great commonwealth, or rather for a number of commonwealths. What visions of empires filled the brain of the chivalrous Spaniards, under Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, as they first gazed upon the placid waters of the South Sea! And how was fired the enthusiasm of Hernan Cortés as he built ships on the western coast of Mexico for northern explorations! Later the friars of St. Francis marched along the shore, and established their line of missions from San Diego to San Francisco Bay. Then men of Anglo-Saxon origin crossed the continent farther north, and hunted for furs in the region drained by the River Columbia; establishing posts north to Fraser River and beyond. Missionaries also came to teach the tribes of the Willamette, and those living on the tributaries of the great rivers to the North. Gold was on every side discovered, and men, who afterward became settlers, came rushing in for immediate riches. And on the coast nearest Asia, the Cossacks from Russia landed, after a century-march through Siberia. Thus was European occupation established throughout the Pacific portion of North America, and thus it happened that the men who laid here the foundations of empires were among the most intelligent and enterprising in the world.

And in regard to the fitness of these lands for the occupation of man, surely there is no fairer or more healthful strip of earth than this western terminus of migrating civilization. Of these Pacific States of North America, including within that category Texas, Mexico and Central America, and onward along the Pacific slope to Alaska; with fertile soils, and temperate airs; a protecting range of mountains in the background while opening in front upon an ocean whose waters wash the four corners of the earth, with agricultural possibilities almost unlimited and millions of mineral wealth yet unearthed, there may be made an imperial paradise. What benefits and blessings of nature are here lacking that may be found on any other part of this planet? With such a people so environed there is no reason why there should not in due time appear on these shores nations among the foremost in the world; nations that shall dominate the world; nations whose history will be of vital interest, not only to the people themselves, but to the world, as any which have hitherto been written. To some it may seem that Greece and Rome and England have exercised a broader and deeper influence

upon the destinies of man than will ever Mexico or Oregon, Texas or California; but we cannot tell. We cannot tell how near the all-knowable and eternal may yet come to man, nor on what chosen spot of earth will the sublimest culture next favor. The civilizations of antiquity flourished while yet the world was small, and thought circumscribed. When Utah shall have had three or five thousand years of national life, perhaps her annals will tell of more benefits to the race than those of Egypt can now boast. But aside from any question of relative importance, what can be of more transcendent interest and value to a nation than its own early history, which tells of its origin, its growth, its trials and temptations, its failures and successes, the almost insurmountable obstacles it has overcome, and its final prosperity and happiness? Men gather gold and sit down to count it; they seize lands and cultivate them; they build houses and fill them, calling it all wealth, and the nation, having many such members, rich and prosperous. But the true wealth of a nation lies in its accumulated experiences, its storehouses of knowledge, and the hearts and minds of a free and intelligent people. These are the kind of acquisitions that history encourages; the quality of development that history accomplishes. What is a nation without a history, without its experiences placed on record to be preserved in an enduring form? Even half civilized peoples have their holy book, their national book, half superstition, half invention, though always containing something true of their past; and savages have their myths, though they may not record them. It is one of the strongest instincts of man thus to remember and preserve, to recite or read the doings of his forefathers. Thus it is that as the world makes history, men are found to record it. As soon as they can write, and long before, they seek to place in permanent form the annals of their nation, and the deeds of their ancestors. The conditions are vastly different under which the histories of the several peoples of the world have been begun and carried on. Some histories have no beginning, no clearly defined starting-point, being obscured by the mists of antiquity; others have knowledge of the nation's inception, the causes that engendered it, and the hour of its birth.

The advantages to us of the recorded experiences of the race are manifold and obvious. With a knowledge of the origin of

human societies, and the ways and means by which they grow and become great and prosperous, we may learn to adopt their virtues and avoid their errors. It is the possession of such knowledge, and the arts and sciences which are sure to accompany and flow from it, that constitutes the difference between civilization and savagism. Unless events are placed upon record they are quickly forgotten; savages cannot record them; therefore they have no past, no foundation laid, or any structure of knowledge begun, to which generation after generation may add its quota; and so they cannot progress, or if at all very slowly. Further than this there is palpable and direct money value in it for the nation, and for every individual having a stake in the country, this placing on the shelves of every important library in the world, and in the hands of thousands of intelligent and influential men everywhere, a full and reliable account of what has been, what is, and what may be.

If this be true—and no intelligent person will for a moment question the general correctness of the proposition—then the labors of the historian are second in importance to none, and they should be entrusted only to able and truth-loving men. Let us glance briefly at the life and literary undertakings of Mr Hubert Howe Bancroft, and see what just claims, if any, he may have as an earnest and honest historian.

Mr Bancroft was born at Granville, Ohio, the 5th of May 1832. His younger days were spent in work and study. At the age of sixteen he entered a bookstore in Buffalo, New York, as clerk. In 1852 the proprietor sent him to California to open business there. Having strong and intelligent literary tastes, he began at once collecting everything within reach on the history and physical features of the country of his adoption, though with no definite object in view. He saw that on the Pacific coast was already well begun the building of empire on a mighty magnificent scale. Material for the history of the republics and states thus planted could then be secured, and saved, much of which would otherwise soon be lost. To many important and still unrecorded events there were yet remaining living witnesses, who would soon pass away, carrying much valuable knowledge with them, unless it was by some one rescued from oblivion. Much could then be saved which in ten or twenty years would be forever lost.

Mr Bancroft saw all this ; and although he felt that one man in such a vast field could accomplish but little, yet he would do what he could. There was no one else at hand to attempt the labor, or even to assist in it. All were eager after money, and, indeed, Mr Bancroft had his fortune to make before he could accomplish his grand purpose, for he was still a young bookseller with very limited capital.

As his business prospered, he applied himself to the task in good earnest. He purchased every book, map and manuscript printed or written within his territory, or elsewhere, relating to it, that could be found in California and Oregon, in Mexico and Central America, and in the eastern United States. He visited Europe several times, searching thoroughly the chief cities in person, and appointing purchasing agents there. Six years thus passed, during which time were secured 10,000 volumes, among which were most of the standard chronicles, such as Oviedo, Peter Martyr, Las Casas and Gomara, with all the later standard histories like Herrera, Robertson and Alaman, with large collections of printed documents, such as Ternaux-Compans, Izcabalceta, Documentos Inéditos, and the like, and also many original manuscripts. Next, and while still continuing the work of general collecting, Mr Bancroft began taking the dictations of pioneers, settlers, and statesmen ; going out himself and sending his assistants, until the leading men, those who had helped to make the history of their country, throughout the entire length and breadth of his vast territory, had been invited to contribute their experiences. This labor resulted in thousands of manuscripts containing the deeds and reminiscences of as many living witnesses, all of course absolutely original, and nowhere else existing. To these were added copies of county, state, and national archives, made at a great expenditure of money, while huge piles of original documents, public and private, were secured from other collectors, and from the descendants of old and patriotic Spanish families, whose members had sometime played an important part in history. These were collected and bound in thick folio volumes, and constitute the most invaluable material for history.

The field thus covered is equal in area to one-twelfth of the earth's surface ; and we venture to assert that never since the world was made, have the early annals of any nation, or

important section, been so thoroughly, so conscientiously, and so intelligently gathered. This statement is made not without reflection, nor in a boastful spirit. It is given simply as a fact, and one capable of the fullest demonstration. We do not say that a hundred others might not have done the work as well or better than Mr Bancroft; or that a hundred others did not see golden opportunity slipping from their grasp; we simply affirm that he alone seized upon the occasion, and stepped in and accomplished the task at the only time and in the only way in which it could be thus so fully and successfully accomplished, and that timely labor of such quantity and quality has never been performed for any other people.

To elucidate: This work of collecting has been going on for twenty-five years. The collection numbers 42,000 volumes, and additions are being made at the rate of about 1000 volumes a year. It constitutes a magazine of priceless treasures, which, if properly preserved, is destined to exercise its influence upon this coast throughout all time. Some of the territory covered dates its history back four hundred years ago, more than a century before the pilgrim fathers landed on Plymouth Rock; but the greater part of it was comparatively new when Mr Bancroft began his labors. The whole country was old enough to have a history, but not so old that the beginning of things, by diligent search, could not be found. There were at the time many men living who had contributed of their intelligence and energy to fashion the early history of their country, and there are some such yet remaining, though they are rapidly passing away. The work of collecting could not have been successfully begun much earlier, as there would have been nothing to collect; it could not have been longer delayed, or much of it would have been lost. And again we assert, that how much soever has been left undone, what is done has never been equaled in any other age or nation. For the greater safety of the collection, Mr Bancroft, in 1881, erected a two-story, fire-proof building on Valencia street, in the city of San Francisco, where his literary labors are at present conducted. Thus was consummated the work of collecting—of creating, we might almost say—this library. For large portions of it were called into existence by Mr Bancroft; and other considerable portions, but for him, would ere this have dropped into oblivion. At an almost

infinite outlay of labor and pains, of time and money, by one man, unaided by any individual society or government, innumerable human experiences have been gathered, which cannot fail to be of the greatest benefit to mankind for generations to come; and if this were all we might safely say that Mr Bancroft had successfully accomplished one of the most important labors possible for man to engage in.

But this is not all. Very far from it. All that had been accomplished thus far was but preliminary to yet greater undertakings. In its crude and original form, the knowledge Mr Bancroft had gathered could be of but little practical value to the people at large; it must first be threshed and winnowed, and the precious grains separated. To this end Mr Bancroft determined to write a series of historical works in 39 volumes, which should embody such historical information as was worth preserving, and which was originally contained in the 36,000 volumes of his library. This would place within the reach of all, in compact form, and at comparatively small cost, the sum and essence of this magnificent collection, which had been gathered from the four quarters of the earth at the cost of so many years of labor, and so many hundreds of thousands of dollars in money. Something, however, besides time and money must be forthcoming properly to write history. Had Mr Bancroft the ability? This remained to be proven. He himself did not know; he had an almost overwhelming desire, for he regarded the writing of history as one of the highest occupations of man; but he could only make the endeavor. This important question is being answered to-day, as the volumes of his history appear, by the press of America and Europe, wherein is paid him the highest tributes of praise. Nor have the brightest scholars of the world, such as Draper, Dana, and Lowell, in America, and in England, Helps, Lecky, and Herbert Spencer been backward in their acknowledgments. It is universally conceded that the clear and condensed narrations of Mr Bancroft, from such a wealth of original material as was never before dreamed of by any writer of history, and which, were it accessible to all, would be wholly beyond the reach even of its possessor except by methods originated and employed by Mr Bancroft, and which will be herein shortly explained; it is universally conceded, we repeat, that history so written from material so gathered, and by

a method so thorough must forever constitute the foundation of Pacific States history, the bottom facts of our historic superstructure, built from the ground upwards, and which never can be ignored or undermined.

Thus far we have examined the origin of history and its advantages to the human race; we have alluded to the position of the Pacific States, their destinies, and the effect on them of Mr Bancroft's labors; we have shown how he gathered his material, and have inquired into his fitness for his self-imposed task. We will now enumerate the several series comprising the complete works of Mr Bancroft; then explain the method by which so vast a labor has been accomplished by one man; and last of all we will respectfully present Mr Bancroft's claims for the sympathy and support of all good men.

The grand central figure of Mr Bancroft's literary undertaking is the *History of the Pacific States of North America*. Introductory to the history is *The Native Races of the Pacific States*, in five volumes, vol. I being devoted to the wild tribes of the entire territory; vol. II, the civilized nations of Mexico and Central America; vol. III, Myths and Languages; vol. IV, Antiquities; vol. V, Primitive History. Then comes the history proper, subdivided as follows: Central America, 3 vols; Mexico, 6 vols; North Mexican States and Texas, 2 vols; New Mexico and Arizona, 1 vol; California, 7 vols; Nevada, Wyoming, and Colorado, 1 vol; Utah, 1 vol; Northwest Coast, 2 vols; Oregon, 2 vols; Washington, Idaho, and Montana, 1 vol; British Columbia, 1 vol; Alaska, 1 vol. The series concludes with the following supplementary volumes, all on kindred topics, but which could not be embodied in the history proper; namely, *California Pastoral*, being life and society under the missionaries from Mexico, 1 vol; *California Inter Pocula*; or times during the gold-mining epoch, 1 vol; *Popular Tribunals*, 2 vols, containing the doings of Vigilance Committees; *Essays and Miscellany*; and *Literary Industries*, or the history of Mr Bancroft's literary labors. All these works are written in an interesting and attractive style and so as to command the attention of both old and young.

Mr Bancroft had been collecting some ten years before he fully made up his mind thus to place his priceless information within

the reach of all, in the form of thoroughly condensed and well-written history. Once determined on this course, he set about its accomplishment with all the energy of his nature. He had spent thus far, not counting his own time or traveling expenses, some \$300,000, and the writing and putting in type of his proposed series would involve an outlay, in addition to many long years of the severest toil and self-denial, of over \$400,000 more. The cost of manufacturing the books from the stereotype plates must be added to these amounts.

It was the severest labor of the kind ever undertaken by a private individual. There are few governments which would not hesitate over the outlay, even to accomplish such magnificent results. But there is no government in Christendom, even were it willing to spend the money, that could accomplish the results. It required the single-minded efforts of a brave, determined man; of a man at once willing, able, and possessed of the means sufficient for the purpose. Besides courage, an iron will, and persistent application, he must have a true and heartfelt love for the work; an enthusiasm that no difficulties could dampen, and no discouragements extinguish; and he must have the health which would carry him through the ordeal. These are conditions which no government possesses, involving qualities which no money can buy. All the required conditions and qualities could not be found in one man out of a million. Business instincts and experience were as essential as literary tastes and intellectual ability; there must be time as well as inclination; habits of application were as necessary as stores of physical strength; the work could no more be accomplished without money than without mind; hence it is safe to say, that if Mr Bancroft had not undertaken this work, no one else would have done so, for in him alone seems to have been centered all the requirements.

But with all the qualifications, and all the other conditions provided for, how was it possible to accomplish in a single lifetime work sufficient to occupy one man at least three hundred years? Authorship involves something more than the mingling with a magic wand of time and money, and the speaking into existence of a series of thoroughly digested and well-executed volumes. After due consideration, having resolved on the undertaking, Mr Bancroft turned over to his brother, Mr A. L.

Bancroft, the active management of a large and successful business which had been built up, still retaining his interest in the same, however. He then engaged a score of competent assistants and went to work. First the entire library was indexed as you would index one book. This occupied on an average six persons for ten years, and cost over \$80,000. It was the only means possible by which the several topics required could be reached, and all that the several authors had said on each incident or subject brought together. Another set of men would take the references thus made by the indexers and abstract the information, which was called rough material. Still other and more competent assistants arranged and revised this rough material, sometimes dividing it into chapters; sometimes writing chapters from it; so that by every and all means the work might be placed in the hands of the author in as advanced a state as possible. Mr Bancroft then re-wrote, and revised until the work was finished. Many of the more important volumes and parts of volumes he worked out with the greatest toil alone, not trusting anyone even to take out the material in the rough. It is impossible fully to explain all the means and experiments, the failures and successes by which the results were reached. The difficulty of obtaining competent assistants was a serious drawback, as out of every hundred tested not more than one would be secured who could work to the general plan, evolved after years of labor from the necessities of the case.

There were maps to be made, and the incoming works of new authors to be examined and compared with what had been written, often involving months of revision, even of matter already in type. Some further idea may be gained of the thoroughness of the work, however, when we say that the entire series, notes and text, was compared with the original authorities by still other men, after the work had been put into type, but before the pages were stereotyped. In a word the means for the accomplishment of the purpose had to be devised as the emergencies arose; and it is safe to say that only by the employment of this or a like method could the work ever have been accomplished. It was a heavy strain upon his health, which several times gave way; but an iron constitution carried him through, until the completion of the herculean task was placed beyond a contingency.

In the matter of patronage, Mr Bancroft does not present himself in the guise of a mendicant. He has given his time, and has poured forth his money freely; he would not recall any portion of either. No thought of the cost, or of the returns, entered his mind in embarking in the work, except the general one that it would absorb the greater part of his fortune. He had been fully taught, by his experience as a publisher, that literary work of this kind does not pay. He feels, as is most natural, that if he has accomplished a meritorious work, he would like the approbation of his fellow-men. If he has conferred an important and lasting benefit on his country, and on every individual member of it, he claims that his services should be recognized.

It should be regarded not only as a duty, but as a privilege, by every patriotic and high-minded man, to aid the author of meritorious effort by every means in his power. His work should be esteemed a public benefaction, and its success of as vital importance to any other member of the commonwealth as to the author. It should be deemed a solemn duty by every father of a family to place this knowledge of his own country, accumulated with so much toil, and written with so much care, in the hands of his children, that they may grow up intelligent and respected citizens.

The price put upon the volumes, as issued, was not fixed by the cost of producing them; for every dollar the subscriber pays, the author has paid two dollars; the price was made to conform to the usual prices of volumes of similar size and character. The first consideration with the author, his primary object in publishing, was that the immense and valuable information he had obtained might be placed within the reach of all; therefore it would be defeating his own purpose to place higher than the usual price upon his works. As a matter of fact, the publishers pay the author only the usual copyright, and the returns are the least of all things that Mr Bancroft troubles himself about.

Now, we ask in all earnestness and honesty, ought not these literary undertakings of Mr Bancroft to be supported and encouraged? If the work was worth doing, if it is, as is claimed for it, and as the leading scholars and scientists throughout the world do not hesitate emphatically to pronounce it, well and thoroughly done, is it not a mistake in several ways for good men to withhold from it their support? It would certainly seem

so, and for these reasons. First of all, it is men like this and work like this—men who will do something beneficial to the commonwealth which no one else will do, and work which is elevating and improving to the minds of old and young—that make the difference between a free, enlightened, and progressive people, and an illiterate, unintelligent, revolutionary, and non-progressive people; hence they cannot afford to pass by and give the cold shoulder to such effort as this to benefit themselves and the community—else they are not high-minded and liberal men. Schools, and colleges, and seminaries of learning are supported by public and private means for the purpose of educating and informing the young. Governments employ historians and scientists, as well as generals and statesmen, and print their writings at a heavy cost to the people. Money enough to found a university has been expended on this work, and judiciously expended; not the public money, but the private means of one individual only; and it would be well to mark this, that Mr Bancroft has never asked nor received aid from any government, society, or individual, nor would he accept aid were it offered. He merely desires the better and more intelligent class to avail themselves of the benefits of his labors, and to express their opinion of them by taking a copy of the volumes into their houses and reading them, and giving them to their children to read. Thus will they exercise an influence in this community and throughout the world—an elevating and educating influence equal to that of a dozen universities.

As a matter of fact, arguments are unnecessary to prove the value to the community, and to individuals, of Mr Bancroft's work, and the necessity of supporting such efforts. The man is yet to be found who says that such a work is useless, needless; that it is not in the highest degree desirable; further than this the man is yet to be found who says the work is not well and thoroughly done. Minor criticisms have been made; but what are these beside the most extravagant praise? It is not claimed for the work that it is perfect; nothing is perfect in this world. But the chief object and effort of the author throughout his entire labors have been absolute accuracy and impartiality, freedom from error, and from religious and political bias. Indeed, the system by which he works prevents them from being far from right, for he goes by his authorities, and gives the authority for

everything he says. According to the evidence, therefore, his works cannot be inaccurate. It being admitted, then, that the work is one that ought to be done by somebody, and that somebody has come forward and accomplished it, and accomplished it well, no one will for a moment say that it ought not to be supported; no one does say so. No one says that it is not a work that every American should be proud of, or that it is not a work which they should have in the house, and in the hands of their children.

As regards the cost, a book is the cheapest thing in the world. We do not realize what the printing-press does for us. For four or five dollars a volume, one can secure what is equivalent to the entire results of Mr Bancroft's expenditure of over half a million of dollars, and a quarter of a century of time. The volumes the purchaser obtains are just as valuable in themselves, convey just as much information, and exert as powerful an influence for good as if they were the only copies in existence. Books are not like houses, or any other kind of property. You cannot print houses; you have to build each one separately from the beginning, and one costs but little more in proportion than fifty. If but one copy of Mr Bancroft's books had been made the cost of it would be, in time and money, a million of dollars. These are simple facts and figures, without exaggeration, and easily understood by all. When the matter is thus placed before good and intelligent men, we do not believe they will say they cannot afford to buy these books. They will say rather, that they cannot afford not to buy them; and they will have a pride, and a very laudable pride, in taking the volumes as they come out, in having them in their house, where they and their family can read them, and they will speak to their neighbor in terms of commendation of the author, and the works which he has done.

One word more, in conclusion. There are some who say they will take the work when it is done; that it is a good thing, a most desirable thing, in fact a necessity, and they certainly will have it in time. This fails to accomplish the purpose, either for the purchaser, the publishers, or the author. The purchaser wants the volumes to read now, as they appear; the publishers want a list of subscribers in order to enable them to meet the heavy expenditure of placing the volumes on the market, and the author

wants appreciation and acknowledgment now, and not ten or twenty years hence, when it will be of no benefit to him.

There are some who would subscribe for part of the series, but do not care to take the whole. There are several reasons why the set should not be broken. First, it is one work, though issued under several titles, and should be read with the volumes so far as published, all at hand, there being necessarily frequent cross references. Secondly, as a complete work it has a permanent pecuniary value to the publisher, which divided, the several sections would not have. The purchaser may rest assured that the publisher will never offer the work for sale at less than the published price; therefore, it will always possess a commercial value should he ever wish to dispose of it. Again, there is a benefit to all, in each having the entire set. If it is well for Oregon that her history should be in the hands of the people of Texas, then it is well for Texas that her history should be in the hands of the people of Oregon. No money or reputation that any single state could afford to give would be an inducement for anyone to write its history, as Mr Bancroft is doing it, and place it in all the principal public and private libraries of the world. But in purchasing the full set, the citizen of Nevada, or of British Columbia is assisting the author to write, and the publisher to place the history of their country in the hands of influential persons who would never otherwise have them.

And finally, the moment the works are offered to purchasers in sub-divisions, the efforts of the publishers to place the work in the hands of intelligent and progressive men throughout the world, thereby exerting the greatest influence and securing the greatest benefits to the country whose history is thus given, must cease; the expenses of so placing the works would far exceed the sales. In other words, we have to sell the works only in complete sets or cease our efforts in that direction.

The objection raised by some during the earlier stages of publication, that possibly the volumes may never all of them be published, has been met by the prompt appearance of the several volumes thus far in such a way as to inspire confidence for the future. Three-fourths of the work is already done, and the remainder as good as done. In a word, the publishers are prepared to assure subscribers of the completion of the work beyond question.

WHAT IS BEING SAID OF MR HUBERT H. BANCROFT AND HIS LITERARY WORK.

STYLE.

"His style is clear and without affectation, recalling the straightforward simplicity of Herodotus."—*London Westminster Review*.

"He writes well and gracefully."—*New York Sun*.

"I am full of admiration at the immense reading it displays, and at the singular, vivid, and graceful English in which that reading is expressed."—*W. H. Lecky*.

"The work is intensely interesting. Mr Bancroft's style is clear, his arrangement of materials judicious, and his symmetry admirable."—*Chicago Journal*.

"Striking passages are welded together with a logical cohesion so strict that it is almost impossible to detach them."—*New York Herald*.

"I am particularly pleased with the sharp, condensed form in which the facts are given."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

"Mr Bancroft's style deserves great commendation."—*S. F. Bulletin*.

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"Clear, concise, forcible, and well-adapted to the requirement of modern students."—*Overland Monthly*.

ABILITY.

"He has applied the scientific methods of history-writing in a manner never before dreamed of."—*Record-Union*.

"Beyond all the patient labor in marshaling details, Mr Bancroft shows also a sound, healthy, literary judgment."—*Atlantic Monthly*.

"He has investigated with the most conscientious care and criticised with no little skill the enormous mass of official documents which in different ways relate to his subject; and he has digested the results of his laborious toil into a narrative clear, logical and attractive."—*London Times*.

"You have handled a complex, sometimes even tangled and tautological subject, with much clearness and discrimination."—*J. R. Lowell*.

"The plan of the great work has been honored in the execution."—*Daily Oregonian*.

"It is a monument of well-directed industry and great ability."—*Edinburgh Scotsman*.

"A lasting monument to the scholarship and ability of its author."—*Louisville Courier-Journal*.

"The industry, the sound judgment, and the excellent literary style displayed in this work cannot be too highly praised. It stands quite alone of its class in this department."—*Boston Post*.

"Mr Prescott was carried away by his vivid imagination, and errs in excess. Mr Morgan errs in the opposite direction. Mr Bancroft avoids both extremes. Without such preliminary work as that which has been done by Mr Bancroft, a history would be impossible."—*Edinburgh Review*.

"The manner in which you have sifted and weighed the testimony, derived as it is from various and sometimes contradictory sources; the penetration and impartiality you have displayed in discarding whatever is erroneous or doubtful, and accepting that only which is well authenticated, would be creditable in a judicial investigation."—*J. Ross Browne*.

"Never was a large library more thoroughly ransacked or more completely laid under tribute by a writer."—*The Nation*.

"When Mr Bancroft expresses opinions of his own, or discourses on the bearing and significance of the observations of others, he performs the part of the enlightened critic with much shrewdness and modesty."—*London Telegraph*.

"Every reader must admire the single-heartedness with which he devotes himself to the investigation of facts. His volumes are really a marvel of research and discrimination. Although he does not conceal his consciousness of a mission, he shows no trace of the credulity with which specialists are apt to pursue the inquiries to which they have devoted their lives. His sound judgment is no less apparent on the pages of his work than his indefatigable diligence and supreme self-devotedness. No one but an enthusiast could grapple with such a task, but his enthusiasm is without weakness, and is inspired by the pure love of knowledge, not by the caprices of sentiment. Hence it is of the quality demanded for the successful accomplishment of one of the foremost literary enterprises of the day."—*New York Tribune*.

"What good sense, painstaking labor, and honesty in purpose can hope to achieve, Mr Bancroft has accomplished."—*London Standard*.

"Nothing seems to have been too minute to escape his eyes."—*Boston Transcript*.

"The history of literature does not contain many examples of a grander literary purpose, a more thorough preparation, or a more successful achievement."—*Boston Congregationalist*.

THE WORK.

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"I am finding your collection of facts very valuable for my own more immediate ends in writing the *Principles of Sociology*."—*Herbert Spencer*.

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and admirable execution, everywhere betraying the union of quiet enthusiasm and sound judgment which have been exercised in its preparation."—*George Ripley*.

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"Seven or eight years ago Mr Hubert H. Bancroft, of San Francisco, surprised the reading world with his *Native Races of the Pacific States*, wherein he gave astonishing glimpses into an antiquity rivaling that of Egypt, and disclosed the little-thought-of fact, that what is called the New World is, quite as likely as not, the old one, ethnologically as well as geologically. That work was regarded as a marvel of research, and justly so, in comparison with most works in the historic field, and had the further credit of investing a naturally dry theme, with a singularly living interest. This was at once accepted as a standard work, and its author thought to have fixed himself among the first historic writers of the day. But the work of collecting material relating to the Pacific States of North American went on after the

completion of that work, until the author has now collected a library of more than thirty-five thousand volumes, all relating to that region, and he has projected and begun a historical work of colossal proportions. So far as is known, business methods, as they may be called, have never been applied on so complete a scale, to the preparation of such a work. The result is marvellous—marvellous in respect to the amount of labor which one man is thus enabled to accomplish within a given time. The value of the history, considered as a whole, depends upon the master-mind which directs the whole—upon its capacity to group facts and generalize from them. This breadth, vigor, and clearness of mental grasp, Mr Bancroft has in an eminent degree. For the first time, the story of the beginnings of Spanish occupation of America is put into a connected and lucidly arranged form in the English tongue. A large portion of the cited authorities has never hitherto been known to the world. Mr Bancroft has unearthed old State and ecclesiastical manuscripts, of whose existence all traces had been lost, and has thrown a flood of light upon subjects which have seemed forever obscured. This is notably so in two or three points. For example, it has always seemed a most extraordinary thing that Columbus should meet with the failures which attended his colonization enterprises, and the repeated neglects and abuses of those in power, if he was indeed the ready-to-be-canonized saint that Irving, for instance, paints him. Mr Bancroft makes the matter clear. With judicial fairness he shows the weak as well as the strong points of the man's character, and one sees clearly how the very characteristics that lead to his success as a navigator and discoverer, totally unfitted him to be either soldier or politician; and, combined with unquestionably unjust treatment, made the latter part of his life full of almost, or quite, insane delusions. Among the most interesting features of the work are the copious bibliographical foot-notes, many of them containing criticisms, nearly always bold, original, acute, of Irving, Prescott, and other authors; but criticism which, however fearless and incisive, is always frank and good-tempered. It would be a pleasure to follow the beginning of this colossal undertaking further in detail, but it is impracticable here. The day will come when the beginnings of the history of the vast empire, yet in its babyhood, on our Pacific slope, will be studied more curiously than that of any other part of the world, and no other work can ever hope to rival that of Mr Bancroft as the standard authority. It presents evidence of wide and patient research; it is generalized with remarkable breadth of view; it is clear in statement, lucid in arrangement, and last, but by no means least, it is pervaded with a flavor of living, breathing interest in its author, which makes it interesting to the reader. In fine, the completed work, finished on the scale of this opening volume, will be worthy to take rank with the very best of modern historical works, with points of superiority to nearly all of them.”—*Chicago Times*.

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analysis of the defects of Irving and Prescott, showing that each was a special pleader, sacrificing the truth of history to the hero he was placing on a pedestal. The author pays a generous tribute to their work, but he shows that it is not history in the best sense of the word."—*S. F. Chronicle*.

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who brought them about, and an account of the people whom they effected. No wider difference in this respect is found than between the methods of Mr H. H. Bancroft and Mr George Bancroft. Both give us the fairest and ripest historical fruits, but the first named scatters along the path of learning also the blossoms of life."—*Rochester Herald*.

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